the richly bound volumes must have cost $1,500.

AFRAID OF OYSTERS.

Lady Naylor-Leyland is one of England's society women who never eats oysters. This is somewhat strange considering that some of the most famous oyster beds in the country are situated not far from her country residence, Lexden park, near Colchester, and she is financially interested in the fishery. The typhoid outbreak of a few years ago, which was supposed to have been caused by the consumption of contaminated oysters, turned the American woman against them. Since then she has taken a personal interest in the cultivation of the oyster beds at Colchester and assures herself that they are free from pollution of all kinds. She does this, she says, in the interests of her friends because she does not want to deprive them of a delicacy no matter how great her own prejudices might be. She distributes large quantities of the best specimens among the hospitals in Colchester, but insists that they must be first examined by the resident medical officers before they are given to any patient. When she has friends at Lexden hall they can eat oysters when in season, but she always points out that she never touches them herself. Quantities are sent to her London house at Hyde Park Gate during the season for the use of her parties, and her friends throughout the country receive generous gifts of them from time to time. For a similar reason—the fear of typhoid—she is opposed to the eating of watercress, and under no circumstances will she have it in her house.

"DOING" THE HOUSE.

Rear Admiral O'Neil, U. S. A., has been "doing" the houses of parliament since his arrival in London a few days ago. Sir Howard Vincent, M. P., escorted him over the house of commons and found him a seat in the distinguished strangers' gallery, where he remained for a considerable time listening to the debates. He dined with the genial Protectionist and a party of friends later on in the house. The house of lords did not appear to have any special attraction for the rear admiral because when he looked in it was full—of empty benches. It is understood that the admiral is going to Ireland to see the spot in the county of Kilkenny where stood his ancestral home. He will not stay long as he intends to spend the most of his holiday enjoying the London season among his American friends.

FASHION'S PENDULUM.

The pendulum of fashion seems to be still swinging backwards. The tiny "pork-pie" hat which crowned the chignons of our grandmothers is to be the smartest headgear of the coming season; and though it is hardly an appropriate topknot for the tall, well-developed, twentieth century woman, it seems likely to catch on to a considerable extent. But the most surprising feature of the early Victorian revival is the return to favor of the nightcap. It is not restored in the grotesque form with which old pictures of indignant dames lecturing late home-coming husbands have made us familiar. It is a thing of beauty—small, made of finest cambric and daintily trimmed with lace. It must be delicately scented as perfumed hair is the vogue of the moment. In its modified and ornamental form it has been eagerly welcomed for the prettiest of women lose much of their comeliness when their foreheads are surrounded by bristling barricades of steel pins.

In the quest for beauty women will do and dare anything. Some crafty critics have been taking advantage of this knowledge to lure her back to her neglected domestic duties by asserting that the robust exercises to which up-to-date girls are addicted—golf, hockey, lawn-tennis and various kinds of gymnastics—are producing an awkward and graceless generation, big-handed, big-footed, long-striding and hoarse-voiced. They assert that the despised occupations of the household are the very things that most quickly impart grace to the feminine figure, and that for the attainment of Venus-like perfection of form there is nothing like sweeping floors, making beds or scouring pots and pans. This suggests delightful visions of duchesses forsaking the golf-links and the swimming baths to wrestle with the ducal counterpane and bed-linen, to ply the broom over velvet carpet and brighten the ancestral silver. But nobody has yet ventured to hold up the British housemaid, rosy-cheeked and buxom though she often is, as the most bewitching type of English womanhood.

JUBILANT SUFFRAGISTS.

Women suffragists are jubilant over the success of their recent Queen's hall demonstration, which was attended by one hundred members of parliament and parliamentary candidates who had pledged themselves to vote for a bill conferring the ballot on the weaker sex. Thirty-five more who couldn't attend had promised to support the measure. Among the latter was John Morley. The great Liberal statesman for a brief period ranged himself on the side of those who are opposed to conferring political powers on women, and the message he sent was greeted with something of that exuberant joy which is felt for the return of the repentant sinner. But the votes promised fall far short of being enough to carry a bill through the house of commons, and there is the house of lords to be reckoned with later.

FEELING OF M. P.'S.

Labouchere asserts that the support pledged amounts to little as an indication of parliamentary feeling on the subject. "M. P.'s," he says, "are always weak where women are concerned. A deputation of women come to a candidate when contesting a constituency to plead the cause of what are called women's rights. He succumbs and agrees to support the 'rights' in the hope that a sufficient number of M. P.'s are not so babby as himself when pitted against the fair sex, and that they will defeat any attempt to write these 'rights' on the statute book."

The brutally candid old cynic disputes women's fitness for political emancipation. "My experience of women," he says, "is that they are usually given to too much talking, and that they approach every subject with a foregone conclusion. Let anyone try to argue with the average woman and he will find that what I say is true. She never answers an argument, but when her views are met with objections she repeats her original opinion with a superfluity of words that an M. P. talking commonplace against time might envy."

FAIR SEX EXCLUSION.

It is interesting to recall how the women of an earlier generation resented and defied a resolution to exclude ladies from the galleries of the two houses of parliament, which was passed in 1738. Lady Mary Wortley Montague relates how a band of fashionables presented themselves in due season and requested admission. They came at 9 o'clock in the morning when Sir William Saunderson respectfully informed them that the chancellor had made an order against their admission. The Duchess of Queensbury, as head of the squadron, pooh-poohed the ill-breeding of a mere lawyer, and desired him to let them upstairs privately. After some modest refusals he swore he would not let them in. Her grace, with a noble warmth, answered that they would come in, in spite of the chancellor and the whole house. This being reported, he then resolved to starve them out. An order was made that the door should not be opened until they had raised the siege.

ARISTOCRATIC AMAZONS.

But the doughty aristocratic Amazons showed themselves well qualified for the duty even of foot-soldiers. They stood there until 5 o'clock in the afternoon without sustenance, every now and then plying a volley of thumps, kicks and raps against the door, with so much violence that the speakers in the house were scarce heard. When the lords were not to be conquered by this the duchess resorted to strategem and commanded a dead silence for half an hour. The chancellor, regarding this as certain proof that they had withdrawn, gave orders for the opening of the door upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors and placed themselves in the front row of the gallery. And they remained there until after 11 when the house rose, giving vent to their feelings occasionally by "noisy laughs and contempts."

Ladies have now long been able to obtain admission to parliament as spectators through the good graces of members, but they find greater attraction in the tea, ices and strawberries than in the oratory. LADY MARY.

STRANGE ROMANCE IN HERMIT'S MURDER

(Continued from page thirteen.)

muster against him and succeeded in starting a lawsuit to get possession of the property.

While awaiting the trial—and those in possession were bent on making him wait as long as possible—Bibiano received from the bishop of Siguenza the appointment of guardian of a hermitage called La Cueva del Beato—the Cave of the Beautified—a short distance from the little town of Cifuentes. The hermitage had been built in the twelfth century as a retreat for pious penitents, and attached to it was a small house. The cave contained some ancient altars and a very old reredos. The country round about was wild and rugged, abounding in precipitous gorges and deep chasms.

It was in December last that the friar took up his abode in the desolate old place. The grounds included an orchard, from which he might obtain some sustenance in summer, but during the winter he was dependent entirely on the alms of visitors to the shrine. Frugal as were his habits, these did not suffice to supply his needs, and he had to make frequent trips to the town to obtain food from the charitable.

His kindliness, gentleness and humility speedily made him a great favorite among its humble inhabitants, and he would have eked out a living and been contented with his lot but for the persecution of a shepherd, Vincent Olmo, who some years before had established himself and his family in the house attached to the hermitage. Olmo was a burly, brutal sort of ruffian, of the type from which the Spanish banditti obtain their allies and recruits.

DRIVEN FROM THE HERMITAGE.

Before the coming of the friar he had appropriated the gifts of visitors to the shrine. That he might obtain possession of them again, he set about making life at the hermitage unendurable to Bibiano. He mocked at his religion, abused and insulted him, and then took to assaulting him. Finally, in the hope that the brute might have some sparks of feeling in him that would be susceptible of pity, the poor friar told him the sad story of his life, and what he aimed at accomplishing to help others similarly unfortunate.

But Bibiano might as well have appealed to a stone. Olmo treated him worse than before. At last the friar's limits of endurance were reached. Black and blue from the bruises he had received he fled afoot to Madrid in the depth of winter. Half famished, he wandered for days about the streets, and at night slept under carts and on doorsteps. In his misery and dire need he even appealed for help to those who were revelling in luxuries on his father's money—the money that had been promised him. Again he was driven from their door

WOLF AND LAMB.

Bibiano saw no way of escaping actual starvation if he remained in Madrid. So he wrote Olmo a letter telling the shepherd that he should have half the alms left by visitors if he would permit him (Bibiano) to return and live in peace at the hermitage. To this proposition Olmo made a hypocritical reply, which was the first step in a dastardly plot he had formed. In his letter the shepherd expressed penitence for his cruel treatment of the friar, and implored him to return, assuring him that he would not be again molested. In the interim Olmo had himself visited Madrid, and had called on the Gils. There are many who attach a sinister significance to this fact and connect it with the terrible crime that followed.

Bibiano returned to the hermitage the day after he received Olmo's letter—on Feb. 20 last. Next day he disappeared. Olmo said that on the night of the 21st a stranger had called to see the friar and he had left the hermitage with him. Suspicions of foul play got about, which were strengthened by the discovery that the shepherd was selling his flock and making preparations to leave. Search parties began to scour the neighborhood. Blood stains were discovered on some stones near the hermitage. Later it was noticed that from the mouth of an abandoned well there came an offensive odor. Then Olmo, who loudly protested his innocence, was arrested.

THE MURDER DISCOVERED.

A mason was lowered down the shaft at the end of a rope. He descended over 120 feet—the full length of the rope—and still had not touched the bottom. But lodged in the crevices of the rock he found some fragments of letters addressed to Bibiano. A few days later a windlass was rigged up over the mouth of the shaft, and the mason made another descent. The governor of the province, various judicial authorities and a large crowd were present. Nearly 200 feet the mason went down, and when he was hauled up he carried a ghastly burden—the body of the poor friar. That he had been murdered was made plain at the inquest. His skull had been smashed by some blunt instrument.

Olmo confessed after this. On some pretext he had lured Bibiano to the belfry of the hermitage church, and while his back was turned had struck him over the head with a crowbar. Then he had thrown the body down the shaft.

The intervention of armed gendarmes alone prevented Olmo from being lynched on the spot. That he will be executed is certain. Regarding his fate, however, little concern is felt. The question that profoundly interests all Spain is whether the Gils were accomplices in his murder. It is pointed out that the shepherd, having got rid of the friar, had—if he acted alone—no motive for getting him back to the hermitage. On the other hand, as Bibiano was pressing a lawsuit to take the bankers' property from them, the Gils certainly had a motive for desiring his removal. Even if they felt reasonably sure of winning the suit and retaining the property, by the death of the friar before the case was tried they could not hope to escape the obloquy which an exposure of their conduct would involve.

Whatever happens—whether they be proved innocent or guilty—there seems no chance that the institution which poor Bibiano had planned will ever be established with the old banker's money.

JOSE MONDEGO.